

IN THE CLAIMS

The following is a listing of the claims currently pending in the above-identified application. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listing of the claims. The cancellation of claims and/or of the deletion of subject matter within a claim is effected without prejudice.

1-65. Cancelled.

66. (New) A process for improving the flavor of a foodstuff which comprises:

adding to foodstuff a product in an amount effective to improve the flavor thereof relative to foodstuffs to which said product had not been added, said product being prepared by the process comprising:

(a) subjecting sugar beet extract to membrane filtration to obtain a retentate and permeate;

(b) recovering said permeate and subjecting said permeate to chromatography;

(c) collecting a front end fraction and at least one other fraction; and

(d) recovering and concentrating the fraction or fractions obtained from step (c) which are debetainized and comprised of a mixture of nonvolatile components substantially comprising salts and organic acids present in said sugar beet extract.

67. (New) A process for improving the flavor of a foodstuff which comprises:

(a) subjecting sugar beet extract to chromatography to obtain a front end fraction and at least one other fraction,

(b) recovering therefrom a product which is debetainized and comprised of a mixture of nonvolatile components substantially comprising salts and organic acids present in said sugar beet extract,

(c) subjecting the one or more debetanized fractions comprised of a mixture of non-volatile components to membrane filtration to obtain a permeate and retenate,

(d) recovering and concentrating said permeate; and

(e) adding said concentrated permeate to said foodstuff in an amount effective to improve the flavor of the foodstuff.

68. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said sugar beet extract has been desugarized and evaporated prior to step (a).

69. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said sugar beet extract comprises molasses.

70. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said membrane filtration comprises ultrafiltration and said mixture has permeated a filter having a molar mass cut-off of 50 kD.

71. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said chromatography is batch chromatographic fractionation or continuous chromatographic fractionation.

72. (New) The process according to Claim 71, wherein said chromatography is batch chromatographic fractionation.

73. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said recovered and concentrated fraction is essentially non-betaine.

74. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein the main cations of said salts are selected from sodium, potassium and calcium and the main anions of said salts are selected from sulphate, chloride, nitrate, phosphate and oxalate.

75. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said sugar beet extract contains organic acids selected from lactic acid, pyrrolidone carboxylic acid (PCA), acetic acid, citric acid and mixtures thereof.
76. (New) The process according to Claim 75, wherein said sugar beet extract contains less than a total of 45 % of said organic acids calculated on the dry substance.
77. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said sugar beet extract contains raffinose and/or sucrose in an amount of less than 60% calculated on the dry substance, respectively.
78. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said sugar beet extract contains less than 1% of each of glucose and fructose calculated on the dry substance.
79. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said sugar beet extract contains less than 10% of amino acids calculated on the dry substance.
80. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said mixture is provided in admixture with a nutritionally and/or pharmaceutically acceptable vehicle or carrier.
81. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said foodstuff comprises nutritionally and/or pharmaceutically acceptable products selected from beverages, dairy products, fruit and berry products, savory, soya based products, confectionery, bakery products, desserts, and sweetened pharmaceutical products.
82. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein said foodstuff is a sweetened product which is sweetened with sucrose or a non-sucrose sweetener selected from high fructose corn syrup, polyols and artificial sweeteners like saccharin,

aspartame, potassium acesulfame, sucralose, neotame, alitame, cyclamate as well as combinations thereof.

83. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, wherein the fraction or fractions recovered comprise a compound or a mixture of compounds having a molar mass lower than about 50 kD, said compounds consisting predominantly of salts and molecules having a molar mass higher or lower than that of saccharose.

84. (New) The process according to Claim 66, wherein the product is prepared by the process comprising ultrafiltration of thick juice withdrawn from a beet sugar manufacturing process using an ultrafiltration membrane having a cut-off size of up to about 10 kD to obtain a permeate and a retentate; recovering said permeate; chromatographic fractionation of said permeate to obtain a front-end fraction and at least one other fraction; and recovering said front-end fraction.

85. (New) The process according to Claim 67, which is prepared by a process comprising chromatographic fractionation of molasses withdrawn from a beet sugar manufacturing process to obtain a front-end fraction and at least one other fraction; recovering said front-end fraction; and membrane filtration of said front-end fraction.

86. (New) The process according to Claim 67, wherein the product is prepared by a process comprising chromatographic fractionation of molasses withdrawn from a beet sugar manufacturing process to obtain a front-end fraction and at least one other fraction; recovering said front-end fraction; ultrafiltration of said front-end fraction using an ultrafiltration membrane having a cut-off size of up to 10 kD to obtain a permeate and a retentate; and recovering said ultrafiltration permeate; and optional concentration of said ultrafiltration permeate.

87. (New) The process according to Claim 66 or 67, to wherein 1 to 2000 ppm of said product is added to foodstuff.

88. (New) A foodstuff to which is added a product in an amount effective to improve the flavor of the foodstuff, said product being prepared by the process comprising:

(a) subjecting sugar beet extract to membrane filtration to obtain a retentate and permeate;

(b) recovering said permeate and subjecting said permeate to chromatography;

(c) collecting a front end fraction and at least one other fraction; and

(d) recovering and concentrating the fraction or fractions which are debetainized and comprised of a mixture of nonvolatile components substantially comprising salts and organic acids present in said sugar beet extract.

89. (New) A foodstuff to which is added a product, said product being added to the foodstuff in amount effective to improve the flavor thereof, said flavor improver being prepared by the process comprising:

(a) subjecting sugar beet extract to chromatography to obtain a front end fraction and at least one other fraction,

(b) recovering one or more fractions from said chromatography which are debetainized and comprised of a mixture of non-volatile components substantially comprising salts and organic acid presenting said sugar beet extract,

(c) subjecting the one or more debetainized fractions comprised of a mixture of non-volatile components to membrane filtration to obtain a permeate and retentate,

(d) recovering and concentrating said permeate.

90. (New) The foodstuff according to Claim 88 or 89, wherein said foodstuff is sweetened with sucrose, reduced sucrose or a non-sucrose sweetener or product.

91. (New) The foodstuff according to Claim 90, wherein said non-sucrose sweetener is selected from the group consisting of high fructose corn syrup, polyols and artificial sweeteners like saccharin, aspartame, potassium acesulfame, sucralose, neotame, alitame, cyclamate, and combinations thereof.

92. (New) The foodstuff according to Claim 88 or 89 selected from beverages, dairy products, fruit and berry products, savoury, soya based products, confectionery, bakery products, desserts, and sweetened pharmaceutical products.

93. (New) The foodstuff according to Claim 88 or 89, wherein said product is present between 1 and 2000 ppm.

94. (New) The foodstuff according to Claim 88 or 89, wherein said foodstuff is a beverage selected from soft drinks, sports drinks, diet drinks, juices, juice drinks, tea, coffee, beer, cider and flavored alcoholic beverages.

95. (New) The foodstuff according to Claim 94, wherein said beverage is a diet soft drink sweetened with a non-sucrose sweetener.

96. (New) The foodstuff according to Claim 95, wherein said soft drink is a cola drink.

97. (New) The foodstuff according to Claim 88 or 89, which is a fruit flavored product.

98. (New) The foodstuff according to Claim 88 or 89, selected from jam, marmalade, fruit flavored yogurt, fruit drink, ice cream, fruit confectionery and fruit dessert.

99. (New) The foodstuff according to Claim 94, wherein said beverage is beer or a flavored alcoholic drink.

100. (New) The foodstuff according to claim 88 or 89, wherein said product is present in an amount between 5 and 5000 ppm (as dry substance).

101. (New) The foodstuff according to Claim100, wherein said product is present in amount between 10 and 200 ppm (as dry substance).